

**'ARTISTRY UNDER OATH':
Biography and the life story of
Hephzibah Menuhin**

**By
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A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'J. L. Kerk'. Below the horizontal line, there is a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

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ABSTRACT

This DCA consists of a creative work, a biography entitled *An Exacting Heart: The Story of Hephzibah Menuhin*, and an exegesis outlining some of the issues involved in writing the biography.

The aim of the project was to tell the story of a fascinating and gifted woman who was not only a talented pianist but whose humanitarian work, with her second husband Richard Hauser, was in many respects ahead of its time. The story of Hephzibah Menuhin also touches and illuminates other issues: the role of the family; the Russian Jewish immigrant experience; the emotional toll of the Holocaust; musical celebrity and its consequences; the peace and feminist movements of the 1960s.

Writing the biography of Hephzibah Menuhin was challenging for several reasons. Though there appeared to be no lack of source material, much was contradictory. Hephzibah's copious letters often give conflicting views of certain events, according to the expectations of her correspondents. Her diaries, usually written as notes to herself, probably give a more truthful account of her life. However, there are several points in her story where the documentary record has been inadequate, where other sources are unsatisfactory, and where conjecture and supposition have been necessary.

The exegesis and the biography are intended to be read together, for the former is intended to be a commentary on the latter.

The exegesis is in five chapters. Chapter 1 outlines and discusses the various sources consulted in writing Hephzibah Menuhin's story. Chapter 2 concerns questions of narrative voice and writing style, and critically examines other models of biographical writing as influences on this biography, as well as discussing the importance and role of conjecture. Chapter 3 examines some of the issues in writing about music and celebrity. Chapters 4 and 5 look at some of the specific problems of this biography, particularly the author's own attitudes and prejudices and their bearing on the finished work, and the sensitivities of Hephzibah's own family members.